

# Welcome to the National Trading Standards (NTS) Scam Marshal Newsletter: January 2022

Total Scam Marshals across the UK: 2,119



**NATIONAL  
TRADING  
STANDARDS**  
Scams Team

## Happy Christmas



I would just like to thank all of you for your hard work this year in helping to make your communities safer places to live by raising awareness of fraud and scams and helping to keep your loved ones safe from these horrible crimes.

We went into the year with a prestigious award for Outstanding Prevention Initiative at the Tackling Economic Crime Awards which has led to numerous media opportunities for us to highlight the great work that you all do in your own way.

We continue to see scam mail coming into the team from yourselves allowing us to build up a real-time picture of what is coming into the country and we will continue to work with other law enforcement agencies to disrupt and prosecute the criminals behind them.

**Thank you again and wishing you all a very Merry Christmas and a great 2022.**

*Louise Baxter MBE – Head of National Trading Standards Scams Team*

## Scamnesty 2021



Due to the success of last year's campaign, the Friends Against Scams Team are once again running a Scamnesty (a scam mail amnesty) campaign aiming to encourage everyone in the UK to send in any unwanted scam and nuisance mail that they receive into us at the National Trading Standards (NTS) Scams Team completely free of charge.

More information can be found on the Friends Against Scams website and we would encourage you to share on any social media platforms you might use. You can talk to family, friends and neighbours about this campaign and encourage them to send in any unwanted mail to:

**NTSST  
FREEPOST  
MAIL MARSHAL**

The amount of mail received during last year's campaign highlighted new trends in mail fraud that the team had not seen before so please help spread the word.

To learn more about scams, visit [www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk](http://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk)

## 12 Scams of Christmas

**1 - Subscription trap;** This scam offers a gift or trial offer. If you pay postage and packaging to receive the 'gift' you may, without realising it, set up a Continuous Payment Authority (CPA) allowing the company to take any amount out of your bank account at any time. You should report these to Citizens Advice.

**2 – Bogus charities;** Fake charities prey on the victim's sense of good will at this time of the year, and their marketing techniques can be very convincing. Make sure that the marketing you have received is genuine. If you aren't sure – don't take the risk. You can check if a charity is genuine by visiting the gov.uk website.

**3 – Fake online shops;** Criminals create fake websites which look reliable and offer all kinds of products from jewellery to clothes, technology and more at cheap prices. Don't be attracted by these low prices as after sending the payment, you may not receive the product! Check if the website you order your Christmas presents from is legitimate by visiting scamadvisor.com.

**4 – HM Revenue & Customs;** Criminals phone unsuspecting members of the public and claim they have over/under paid their tax. Beware - *never* give out your bank details, hang up the phone immediately and report to Action Fraud

**5 – Bank scams;** Criminals may phone you and claim to be calling from your bank to report 'suspicious activity' on your account. If you receive a call like this, hang up immediately and phone your bank on a number you know to be legitimate (e.g. from the bank's website)

**6 - Purchase scams;** you may be tricked into sending money via bank transfer to buy goods or services, often advertised online, which do not actually exist. When you shop online this Christmas, the best ways to keep safe are to buy from a trusted retailer whenever possible, and always pay by card for the greatest protection.

**7 - E-greeting (online) cards;** Be careful when sending/receiving online greeting cards as they can contain malware which can find address books and bank details stored on your computer.

**8 – Bogus gift cards;** Gift cards are ideal for that 'hard to buy for' person, but be aware if you are buying these online, as gift cards are easy to illegitimately replicate and could cause embarrassment to your friends and family when they try and use your gift... and they are fake.

**9 – Delivery scams;** Deliveries will inevitably increase this time of year as presents are bought so it's hard to keep track. Criminals use this as an opportunity to target consumers. If you get a text saying that your package requires payment for it to be delivered, it's probably a scam! Report it by forwarding the message for free to 7726 (spells 'SPAM' on your telephone keypad).

**10 – 'Brushing' scams;** the sellers on Amazon Marketplace may send you unsolicited parcels to create fake increases in their sales numbers. Amazon sellers are banned from sending such parcels by the company so if you have received one, make sure you report it to the Amazon customer service team.

**11 – NHS Covid Pass scams;** Messages saying you're eligible to apply for a Covid Pass are sent via texts and emails claiming to be from the NHS. They include a link that appears to be to the genuine website but is in fact a scam website set up to steal your personal details. Vaccine passes are completely **free** via the NHS app or by asking a physical pass to be posted to you.

**12 – Extortion scams;** Criminals contact you claiming they have embarrassing or incriminating information about you and threaten to release that information if you don't send them payment. If the criminal shows you they have a password you're currently using, change that password immediately. Remember, these scam messages are designed to scare you, don't fall for it!